

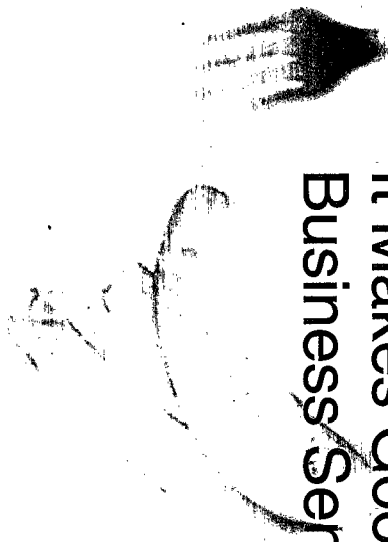


U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Solid Waste
Communications Services Branch
401 M Street, SW.
Washington, DC 20460

Official Business
Penalty for Private Use, \$300

EPA Waste Prevention

It Makes Good
Business Sense!



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Minimize Waste, Maximize Profits!

As in every business, your company's **bottom line** is your **top priority**. While you might never have considered it before, the garbage your company generates can cut into your company's **profit margin**. Not only do you pay to transport and dispose of waste, but you could be inadvertently throwing away **valuable resources**. Minimizing waste can help to maximize profits. By reducing discards—from computer paper to cafeteria trays—you can save money, increase productivity, and even attract customers. Just a few simple changes, such as eliminating some paper memos or a layer of shipping material, can translate into **big savings** for your organization. And many companies don't stop there. Some firms have implemented comprehensive waste prevention programs that save them **millions of dollars** annually!

Computer Manufacturer Redesigns Packaging for Big Savings

A Massachusetts-based supplier of networked computer systems, software, and service redesigned protective packaging to ship large computer enclosures. The result was a 31 percent reduction in packaging volume for this product and an estimated first year savings of \$200,000.

What Is Waste Prevention?

Waste prevention, also referred to as source reduction, involves the design, manufacture, purchase, or use of materials and products to reduce the amount or toxicity of what is thrown away. Experts agree waste prevention is the most effective way to control municipal solid waste.

Waste prevention is not recycling. Recycling is a beneficial way to **manage** materials that would otherwise become waste, whereas waste prevention helps create less waste in the first place. For waste that cannot be prevented, however, recycling is the next best choice.

To help you set up a waste prevention program tailored to your own company, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has developed a handbook of case studies from successful business waste prevention programs and a waste prevention guidance manual. To order these publications free of charge, send in the form at the end of this pamphlet.

What Are the Benefits of Waste Prevention?

Your business could reap significant benefits from waste prevention, including:

- Reduced waste disposal costs
- Savings in material and supply costs
- Savings from more efficient work practices
- Revenues from marketing reusable materials

Waste prevention also can enhance your corporate image and help you stay competitive. In addition, your employees might welcome, and even champion, waste prevention initiatives, giving a boost to company teamwork and morale.

Waste prevention benefits the environment, too. Waste prevention can conserve natural resources and slow the depletion of valuable landfill space. It also can reduce the pollution associated with the manufacture of products. In addition, reducing the amount of hazardous constituents in goods can reduce potential management problems at landfills and incinerators when these items are discarded.

Some Approaches to Waste Prevention

If you are implementing a comprehensive waste prevention program, you will want to look at all of your operations for opportunities to cut waste. Here are some tips to get your waste prevention program started:

Use or manufacture minimal or reusable packaging.

Encourage your suppliers to eliminate unnecessary packaging. In your purchasing, you can favor suppliers who offer products with minimal packaging. Whenever possible, buy products in bulk quantities and in reusable packaging. To reduce waste in your own shipping department, see if you can use fewer layers and ship merchandise in returnable or reusable containers.

Use and maintain durable equipment and supplies.

Consider investing in quality, long-lasting supplies and equipment that can be repaired easily. These items will stay out of the waste stream longer, and the higher initial costs may be justified by lower maintenance, disposal, and replacement costs. Setting up a regular maintenance schedule for machines will extend their useful lives, cutting back on waste and the need to replace expensive equipment.

Reuse products and supplies.

Adopt simple, cost-effective measures to conserve materials through reuse. Disposable items, such as coffee cups and single-use cafeteria trays, can be replaced with long-lasting, reusable products. A one-time investment for such items breaks the frequently expensive cycle of discarding and reordering. Encourage employees to reuse common items such as files and interoffice envelopes.

Reduce the use of hazardous constituents.

Find out which products in your graphics and maintenance departments (such as ink, solvent, paint, glue, and other materials) are available with fewer or no hazardous constituents. Ask your suppliers about water-based (rather than oil- or solvent-based) products.

Utility Licks Purchase Costs with Reusable Envelopes

A utility company in Maryland uses "send-in'-return" envelopes to save money and time and decrease waste. One envelope is used for both sending bills and returning the payment. This strategy avoids using 1.5 million return envelopes per year, which equals a \$55,000 savings in purchasing costs.

PLACE
STAMP
HERE

RCRA Information Center (5306)
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
401 M Street, SW.
Washington, DC 20460

EPA Offers Additional Information on Preventing Waste

EPA has published two documents to help businesses design and implement waste reduction programs in their facilities:

Waste Prevention Pays Off: Companies Cut Waste in the Workplace, a 24-page handbook, presents a brief overview of waste prevention strategies that are working for different types of businesses.

A Business Guide for Reducing Solid Waste is a 92-page manual providing detailed "how-to" instructions for businesses that are ready to embark on a waste reduction program.

Order Form

Please send me:

☐ **Waste Prevention Pays Off: Companies Cut Waste in the Workplace**

☐ **A Business Guide for Reducing Solid Waste**

Name _____

Company _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____

Telephone _____

Use supplies and materials more efficiently.

Try changing some of your company's operations to increase efficiency, reduce waste, and conserve materials. Examples include switching to double-sided copying and using electronic mail instead of paper memos.

Compost yard trimmings on site.

An option that most companies can adopt to reduce waste is "grasscycling," or leaving grass clippings on the lawn. In addition, if your company has sufficient space, start a compost bin on site for grass and leaves, rather than shipping them elsewhere for disposal. Composting is a natural process by which yard trimmings and other organic materials are allowed to decompose under controlled conditions.

Exchange, sell, or give away unneeded goods or materials so they can be reused.

Donate excess food, used furniture, and other materials to local organizations, such as homeless shelters or charities. You might try exchanging materials with another company. In a materials exchange, businesses trade, sell, or give away goods or materials that would otherwise become waste.

Eliminate unnecessary items.

Finally, don't overlook the obvious! Over time, your company may have begun routinely using materials that contribute little or nothing to your product or service. Eliminating the use of such unnecessary items can add up to significant waste reductions—and cost savings!

For More Information

Call the RCRA/Superfund Hotline at 800-424-9346 or TDD 800-553-7672 for the hearing impaired. For Washington, DC, and outside the United States, call 703-412-9810 or TDD 703-412-3323.

EPA has a program to encourage and assist businesses to reduce solid waste. For information on the WasteWi\$e program, call 1-800-EPA-WISE.